

This global sports competition promotes integrity and emphasizes the fair application of rules and regulations. It is thus fitting that Belarus should do the same and show its citizens and the international community that it can play by the rules.

I then call upon the Belarusian officials for the immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners, including Ales Bialiatski, Mikalai Statkevich, and Eduard Lobau, whom Amnesty International regards as prisoners of conscience, imprisoned solely for the peaceful exercise of their human rights.

ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES AFFECTING OUR REGION

(Mr. KILMER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. KILMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight the challenges facing our coastal communities.

Last week, I was honored to help organize a conference in my district that brought increased attention to the economic, social, and environmental priorities of tribal communities.

With Interior Secretary Sally Jewell, tribal representatives, and other Federal agency officials and stakeholders, we were able to make significant progress in recognizing the need for active and sustained engagement on economic environmental issues affecting our region.

Secretary Jewell rightly pointed out that we have a moral obligation to act in the face of rising sea levels, ocean acidification, and severe weather patterns caused by climate change. In my district alone, three tribes are currently in the process of relocation due to the threats of floods.

Mr. Speaker, it is time to act. Let's help regions identify their infrastructure needs and work cooperatively to help ensure that we are protecting coastal communities and their heritage sites, maintaining livelihoods, and living up to our treaty and trust obligations.

Let's also work to develop new, cleaner energy sources, cut carbon emissions, and lead a global effort to tackle the real threat of climate change.

REAUTHORIZE THE EXPORT-IMPORT BANK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. HECK) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HECK of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Washington?

There was no objection.

Mr. HECK of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of reauthorization of the Export-Import Bank that begins this discussion.

I yield to the gentleman and my friend and a passionate advocate on behalf of the Export-Import Bank, Congressman CÁRDENAS from the 29th District of California.

Mr. CÁRDENAS. Mr. Speaker, we need to reauthorize the Export-Import Bank. It is very rare that you will see, quite frankly, any government on the planet that actually has a program that they support, that actually puts money back to the taxpayers rather than costing the taxpayers.

I say that is rare anywhere in the world. It certainly is rare here. This Export-Import Bank in the United States is in fact that kind of organization. For example, last year the bank supported 205,000 American jobs. I did not say "exported jobs." I said "supported 205,000 American jobs." That is what those loans did for American companies.

In addition to that, it should be noted that the loans that are being given are actually filling the gap that private banks will not or choose not to support; but our American companies need that kind of support, especially when they are competing in our global economy. The Export-Import Bank is exactly that mechanism that should exist.

What I would like to ask all Americans is to go ahead and go online and start tweeting Export-Import Bank and find out what your Congressman or Congresswoman thinks about the reauthorization of the Export-Import Bank.

If you care about jobs, if you care about the person who lives next to you or down the street and they are unemployed, the Export-Import Bank is an answer to solving some of the problems in our economy in this country. Yes, there are too many Americans out of work, but not reauthorizing the Export-Import Bank will just contribute even more to companies in the United States not being able to compete, but also possibly closing their doors.

In addition to that, I would like to point out that every developed country in the world actually has their version of an Export-Import Bank. And some of those countries like China and India are actually tenfold, maybe 100 times the support that we are giving to our domestic companies here they are giving to their companies so they can compete or perhaps overcompete around the world.

I think it is important for all of us as Americans to understand that there is something good about the Export-Import Bank, and that is that it exists for creating American jobs. That is exactly what it is doing. If you are concerned about the American tax dollar, you would support the reauthorization

of the Export-Import Bank because all it does is create more jobs and more taxes in the coffers, and it doesn't take away anything from the taxes of the American public.

Mr. HECK of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from the 18th Congressional District of Florida, Congressman PATRICK MURPHY, another passionate advocate on behalf of reauthorization of the Export-Import Bank.

Mr. MURPHY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Washington for his advocacy and passion for this critical issue for our country and for American jobs.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak out on the urgent need for Congress to reauthorize the Export-Import Bank, boosting job growth at home and the export of American-made products abroad.

Coming from the private sector, one of the first things I did after being elected was embark on a jobs tour, which included over 70 meetings, roundtables, and company visits within the first year. I have taken ideas and suggestions from all of these conversations and have put them into a plan to grow jobs in the Palm Beach-Treasure Coast district that I am so proud to represent.

This plan consists of commonsense, pro-growth policies that allow new businesses to gain a solid foothold in a tough economy and for existing businesses to expand and prosper. One of the major focuses of this plan is on how the government can provide stability and certainty and resources to keep jobs at home by investing in our manufacturing sector and promoting exports of American-made goods abroad. Reauthorization of the Export-Import Bank with greater lending authority is one pillar for how we can do this.

As my voting record shows, I have strong feelings about government overspending. As a former small business owner myself, I know that government does not create jobs. But government does have the responsibility to create an environment conducive to job growth, and that is exactly what the Ex-Im does at zero cost to taxpayers.

It is an unfortunate reality that the United States buys much more than it sells. In 2013 alone, we imported over \$400 billion, about 25 percent of GDP, more than we exported. We need to reverse this trend by boosting U.S. manufacturing and exports.

Now, the world knows we have the best equipment and the most highly trained workforce, and our products are sought after around the world for their high quality and skilled workmanship.

We must better leverage these strengths and provide greater opportunity to export goods made in America. One of the best ways to do this is by reauthorizing the Export-Import Bank before its current charter expires on September 30.

Just a few months ago, we celebrated the 80th anniversary of the Ex-Im Bank

and its commitment to boosting the sales of U.S. products overseas. Ex-Im supported over 200,000 American jobs in 2013 alone and generated over \$1 billion in revenue in 2012. With my district being home to a growing manufacturing sector and its proximity to several major ports, export sales are a major economic issue for our community, contributing tens of millions of dollars to our local economy every year.

The Ex-Im Bank is especially beneficial to small businesses, which are the backbone of our economy, creating two-thirds out of all new jobs nationwide.

□ 1615

More than 85 percent of Ex-Im's transactions benefit U.S. small- and medium-sized businesses, helping these entrepreneurs compete globally.

In my district, the majority of exporters are also small businesses. I recently met with one such business during my jobs tour, Locus Traxx Worldwide. They were recognized with an Export Achievement Award by the U.S. Department of Commerce for their successful entry into the international marketplace.

I also must commend our local Export Assistance Center for the great work they do with local businesses such as Locus Traxx, helping them utilize the Ex-Im Bank to promote the selling of goods made in America to buyers overseas.

You see, the Export-Import Bank makes a real difference to our economy at the local, State, and national level. It is a highly effective and completely self-sustaining mechanism that businesses of all sizes use to finance exports.

Even in times of intense partisanship, we should all be able to agree on the value the Ex-Im Bank provides to our economy. It would be shortsighted and detrimental to our economic recovery to allow its charter to expire.

We must work together to build a brighter future for our Nation, strengthen our workforce, grow our economy, and reduce our deficit. To do that, we must come together to continue to support successful programs like the Ex-Im Bank that help small businesses prosper, support American jobs, and boost our exports.

Now, we can have our differences, but at the end of the day we have to do what is in the best interest of America. And to do that, we have to work together. It shouldn't matter who gets the credit, as long as America and Americans succeed.

For 80 years, the Ex-Im Bank has been making sure that we succeed. I strongly urge my colleagues to join in calling for the commonsense reauthorization of the Ex-Im Bank so that we may continue to support American businesses' access to global markets and increase our Nation's international competitiveness.

I want to thank the gentleman from Washington for his leadership.

Mr. HECK of Washington. When someone in America builds a better mousetrap or improves upon the design of an existing product, the world takes notice. Companies, governments, and industries in countries from South Africa to Turkey and in between are potential customers for well-crafted, American-made products.

But in the modern-day globalized economy, credit is necessary for complex transactions. Buyers and sellers need assurance that the deals are legitimate. Without that, they are forced to imitate products, violate intellectual property rights and standards, and American companies lose out on market share.

For 80 years, our economy has expanded and grown beyond our borders and into the developed and developing world, in part because of the Export-Import Bank of the United States. Today, with U.S. trade deficits growing as exports fall, we need now more than ever to be able to support increases in exports.

Exports accelerate our economic growth, and the Export-Import Bank is a key part in encouraging just that activity. Increased exports translate into more jobs in America. Studies have shown that export-related jobs pay, on average, 15 to 18 percent more than the overall average. They are better-paying jobs.

Finally, with 95 percent of the potential customers of U.S. goods and services living outside our borders, exporting provides vast potential for American businesses, large and small.

Ninety-five percent of the world lives outside our borders, and the rest of the world is growing a middle class. So think of it this way. If we want to keep and grow our middle class, we better be selling into the rest of the world's growing middle class.

This is not, and has never been, about picking winners and losers. The Export-Import Bank simply serves to bridge the gap between those who want American goods and services and Americans that have goods and services to sell. It is about leveling the playing field so that small operators have access to a global market of customers equal to that of large corporations.

For example, the Bank's export credit insurance policy provides payment coverage for commercial risks such as buyer default and political risk from war or unrest. The insurance also ensures that businesses no longer have to forego sales because they cannot match the credit terms offered by global competitors. This is what we are talking about when we say it levels the playing field.

There is no other private lender currently offering what the Export-Import Bank provides American businesses. For example, 89 percent of the bank's transactions directly benefit U.S. small businesses. That doesn't even include the small businesses that make up the supply chain of the larger companies

whose goods are purchased from foreign entities.

If you want more information on this, the very best place to get it is at the Export-Import Bank's own Web site, www.exim.gov. Look up the businesses in your area that have benefited from the Export-Import Bank.

As was mentioned earlier, lo and behold, we actually even make money off the Export-Import Bank. Last year alone, over a billion dollars transferred to the U.S. Treasury off the profits of the Export-Import Bank. As a matter of fact, in the 80 years of its existence, quite literally not one red penny of American taxpayer dollars has ever been used in support of the Ex-Im. Not one red penny. It lowers the deficit and does not use taxpayer dollars.

As I mentioned, it is small companies. Take a company like Pexco, which is located in the 10th Congressional District in Fife, Washington. They produce traffic control products you see on the road when repairs are being made, like traffic cones, raised curbs, reflective signs, and barricades indicating where the road is blocked off. They are used all over the world.

In fact, just recently, a distributor from Denmark purchased \$125,000 worth of Pexco products, which was financed by the Export-Import Bank. No commercial bank would have touched that transaction. But it guaranteed the products would reach Denmark. They were done reliably because of the Export-Import Bank.

In fact, in this individual company's instance, which is not atypical of their sales—and they are a small company of 200 employees—over half is sold internationally. Ten percent of total sales are financed by the Export-Import Bank.

So what is the result? The residents of Fife, Washington, are put to work producing their popular products in traffic safety all over the world.

I mentioned it was FDR that actually created the Export-Import Bank 80 years ago, and although it was actually initiated and created by a Democratic administration, the support of it has always been strongly bipartisan.

Republican Presidents such as Dwight Eisenhower, Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, and George W. Bush supported the mission of the Ex-Im Bank, as did Bill Clinton. All these Presidents were staunch supporters of capitalism and the Ex-Im Bank.

Listen to what President Reagan said when he signed the reauthorization, which was a bill that was reauthorized almost unanimously, in 1986:

This sends an important signal to both our exporting community and foreign suppliers that American exporters will continue to be able to compete vigorously for business throughout the world.

Perhaps an even more conservative voice, former Vice President Cheney, said in 1997:

Some of my fellow conservatives on the Hill may have a philosophical problem with the fact that the bank is a government agency, but if they consider the success of its

lending programs, it would be difficult for them to object on budgetary grounds.

For every dollar put into Ex-Im, Cheney said, “there’s been a \$20 return to the U.S. economy.”

And again, the same speech, Vice President Cheney said:

Ex-Im Bank is remarkably effective at helping create jobs, opportunities for trade, stable democracies, and vibrant economies throughout the world. The Bank has made a tremendous contribution as a rapid response, service-oriented agency designed to meet the export financing needs of American businesses.

Indeed, the Bank has been reauthorized a number of times throughout its history—almost always unanimously, until of late—each time making it more effective for the economic climate of the time.

So let’s have a conversation about how to make it better. Let’s have a conversation on how to get the word out to businesses that they have yet to tap into their potential global markets. Let’s talk about how to get our economy running and get ahead of our global competitors.

Let’s remember, as Congressman CÁRDENAS alluded to, every single developed entity in the world has an Ex-Im Bank-like entity, and if we do not reauthorize the Ex-Im Bank, it is the equivalent of and tantamount to unilateral disarmament in a global economy—one in which global trade has increased fivefold just since 1980.

What is the Export-Import Bank about? It is about jobs, jobs, jobs. Yes, 200,000 last year, but over a million in the last 4 years.

Every month we spend debating the merits of the Export-Import Bank instead of encouraging companies to explore the world market, the economy loses billions of dollars in potential export opportunities. The jobs, especially in manufacturing, stagnate. People remain unemployed when they want to work.

As a member of the House Financial Services Committee, I am encouraging, I am urging, I am beseeching, I am pleading with the chair to hold hearings as soon as possible on reauthorization of the Export-Import Bank. We have been waiting 15 months for something to happen. And it is time to move forward.

Let us be clear-eyed and cold-blooded about what the cost is of not doing anything. At a recent roundtable of businesses who had been involved with the Export-Import Bank there was a gentleman present from a company in California. I believe his name was Steve Wilburn and the company was named FirmGreen.

Literally, in the course of the conversation he raise his hand and he said, I just lost a multimillion-dollar order of sales, and I am told the reason I lost it is that our competitor manufacturer, which was in another country, persuaded the purchaser that the cloud hanging over reauthorization of the Export-Import Bank may mean it will

not be there when you need it. We lost millions in sales because Congress dithered.

Ladies and gentlemen, at the end of the day, this is the most straightforward imaginable proposition. This is about shoring up, strengthening, supporting the manufacturing sector of the American economy and creating good-paying jobs.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

CURRENT EVENTS AFFECTING AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker’s announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, at this time I yield to my dear friend, Dr. VIRGINIA FOXX.

Ms. FOXX. Thank you, Congressman GOHMERT, my classmate and friend. I appreciate very much you yielding time.

Mr. Speaker, last week, I had the opportunity to visit a remarkable public school in Kernersville, North Carolina. In addition to preparing students academically for college, the North Carolina Leadership Academy is publicly committed to giving their 400 students “the opportunity to develop true leadership qualities and become creative thinkers and problem-solvers while retaining a sense of responsibility for their families, their community, and their country.”

NCLA has an ambitious mission, and they are executing it so well that last year this charter school had over 700 applicants for 95 openings. The wait list has over 600 names, and is growing.

□ 1630

It was a privilege to spend time with the remarkable students and faculty of NCLA. I was truly impressed by their commitment to scholarship, by the leadership skills of the students, and by the remarkable academic progress that was on display.

All NCLA students in grades 7–12 participate in Civil Air Patrol, a program established by Congress in 1946 that uses military-style uniforms, customs, courtesies, ceremonies, and drill in order to improve student leadership skills, fitness, and character. This program is working.

NCLA places a strong emphasis on family involvement; and the level of commitment demonstrated by parents, families, and the Piedmont community at large was impressive.

Community engagement is a key to success of any school, and the community’s support for NCLA is a good reminder that decisions about the education of our youth should remain local.

I have been a strong supporter of charter schools for my entire legislative career. In the North Carolina

State Senate, I supported charters as one of the best hopes to genuinely reform our school system.

In Congress, those of us who support charter schools should express that support by ensuring that Federal policy encourages States to adopt expansive charter laws.

Further, we need to ensure that Washington does not put up bureaucratic roadblocks that would keep State, city, and county governments from experimenting with new ideas and establishing effective charter school programs.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot say enough about how impressed I was to spend time with the educators of the North Carolina Leadership Academy, individuals who seek daily to impress upon the students the values encapsulated in the school motto of “Scholarship, Leadership, Citizenship.”

I expect many good things from the remarkable young scholar leaders currently being educated by this wonderful school. The community will reap the benefits of having this school in its midst for years to come.

Mr. GOHMERT. I appreciate so much my colleague from North Carolina. Having been a president of a university, she knows all about education.

It is certainly one of the areas where we are failing American youth these days, and you would have thought that, if the Federal Government were the answer to everybody’s problems, then when President Carter started the Department of Education, everything would have gotten instantly better; but over 35 years later, it turns out the Federal Government is not the answer to better education.

I have talked with enough high school students who also say the Federal Government is not the answer to their food problems. I have met with cafeteria workers and leaders who say that kids are not eating the food. They are required to choose from lists of foods to put on the plates that they had heretofore not heard of before that students don’t want, don’t like.

The football players were saying last fall: How in the world can we go to football practice and all we get is this piddly little bit of meat and other stuff we can’t eat?

So obviously, education, food has not been helped, certainly not according to my constituents in east Texas, the vast majority; and education itself does not seem to have made all that great or remarkable progress since the Carter administration started the Department of Education and Congress began putting strings on virtually everything they did in the way of educational support.

The 10th Amendment had some real meaning and was really visionary. It was the last of those first 10 Bill of Rights and, in essence, said everything that is not specifically enumerated as a power of the Federal Government is reserved to the States and the people; that is because the genius of our